



The Tahoma News

September 2 - December 31, 2014



Reintroducing Fishers to Native Habitat

Most of Mount Rainier's wildlife is fairly elusive, but you are likely to see deer, marmots, and squirrels during your visit, and maybe even mountain goats if you venture into the highcountry. What's missing here? The Pacific fisher, a small carnivore the size of a house cat, has been missing from its native habitat on Mount Rainier's slopes since the mid-1930s.

The fisher is a small, reclusive predator of the weasel family that thrives in mature forests. Along with wolves, wolverines, and lynx, fishers were extirpated (eliminated) from Mount Rainier early in the last century. Fishers throughout Washington State declined primarily through trapping harvest, pest control, and habitat loss associated with an expanding human population. In response to concerns about a declining harvest, the State closed the trapping season in the mid-1930s. The species never recovered. Despite numerous directed surveys throughout the state in the 1990s, no fishers were detected, and the State listed them as an endangered species in 1998.

Ecosystems evolve through the interactions among all their constituent species, each one representing an integral component of the whole. This process has taken place for hundreds of thousands of years, with each species settling into its place in the ecosystem. Generally, more complete ecosystems are more stable—each species plays a role in ecosystem dynamics, acting as a buffer to internal and external forces which may disrupt the ecosystem. Diversity among species can be likened to diversity in an investment portfolio—increasing diversity helps temper the large swings in value of the portfolio.

The National Park Service relies on and protects natural processes, and the absence of a native species compromises these processes. Over the next four to six years, Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks are teaming up with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to reintroduce fishers to their historical range in the Cascades. Depending on the availability of fishers from the source population in British Columbia, reintroduction efforts may begin as early as this fall.

Returning fishers will restore a critical native predator to a spectacular forest ecosystem.

Winter Road Closures

As autumn slips into winter and storms bring snow to Mount Rainier, roads will close for winter. Look for most roads to reopen in May or June.

- Stevens Canyon Road closes on November 3 or with the first heavy snowfall.
- The Sunrise Road closes at the junction with the White River Campground Road on October 14 or earlier with the first heavy snowfall.
- The White River Road closes at SR 410 on November 3 or earlier with the first heavy snowfall.
- Depending on snowfall, Washington State Department of Transportation usually closes the east section of SR 410 and Chinook Pass in late November. SR 410 is normally closed at the northeast park boundary by early December, and Cayuse Pass and SR 123 north of Ohanapecosh close at the same time. Call 1-800-695-ROAD for current status.
- Mowich Lake Road closes October 27 or with the first snowfall.
- The road between Nisqually Entrance and Longmire remains open throughout winter except during extreme weather.
- The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly beginning November 3 through winter. It reopens the following morning or when snow-removal activities and conditions allow.

Poor visibility and reduced traction present driving hazards in winter. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of road are not. Use caution. Stay alert.



Mountain Colors

Mount Rainier is famous for its amazing wildflower meadows in summer and for abundant snowfall in winter. Fall is another spectacular season on the mountain with crisp, clear days more the norm than the exception in early to mid fall than in summer. Bear frequent the meadows to forage on huckleberries. A highlight of the season is the vibrant colors of fall foliage from the old growth forest up to the subalpine meadows at treeline.

Viewing Fall Colors

- Look for changing vine maple at lower elevations throughout the park
- Take the three-mile drive out Westside Road to see fall colors. Hike from there to enjoy more fall foliage.
- Hike Grove of the Patriarchs and Eastside trails to see the reflection of fall colors in the Ohanapecosh River.
- Photograph the historic rustic buildings accented by autumn hues at Longmire.
- See the subalpine meadows cloaked in the red and orange of changing huckleberry at Paradise, Sunrise, and throughout the park's backcountry.
- Take a drive on Stevens Canyon Road and the eastside roads (SR123 and SR410), famous for their fall colors.
- Stop at viewpoints to see slopes and avalanche tracks awash in the colors of fall.

Welcome...

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 as the nation's fifth national park. In every sense, this park we visit and enjoy today is a gift from those who came before us. Within the context of the National Park Service mission—preserving special places and important stories for people to experience and enjoy—our responsibility is to care for the park and pass it on in good order to those who will come after us.

Increasingly, we rely on people who care deeply about the park to help take care of it—people like you. Mount Rainier is a park that could not function without the many people who volunteer. Seventeen to eighteen hundred volunteers donate over 70,000 hours each year at the park; they help in every way imaginable. When you see a volunteer, please thank them for their service.

Financial donations from individuals and organizations also serve an important and growing role in caring for the park. We are using donations this year to support volunteers, youth education and crews, trails maintenance, wildlife research, and search and rescue. Recently, we have been working with our non-profit fund raising partner, Washington's National Park Fund, to create an endowment for Mount Rainier. For people who want to leave a legacy that will help the park in perpetuity, the endowment fund will provide the means to do so.

Please enjoy, share, and protect your park. May your visit become part of a cherished, personal connection with Mount Rainier.

Randy King,
Superintendent



Superintendent
Randy King

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Passionate About Your Park?

Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow:

- Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, drop a few coins in the donation boxes at park visitor centers, or purchase a Washington State license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Consider giving back to the park through Washington’s National Park Fund: www.wnnpf.org or email at fund@wnpf.org.
- Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Opportunities abound, and great personal rewards await. Learn more at www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm.

Hiking the Muir Snowfield

The Muir Snowfield, a permanent field of snow, ice, and rock outcrops, is located north of Paradise between 7,000 and 10,000 feet in elevation. Thousands of people hike on the Muir Snowfield each year en route to Camp Muir. On a clear day, the hike is spectacular. But when the weather deteriorates, as it often and unpredictably does, crossing the Muir Snowfield can be disastrous.

- Avoid the snowfield in questionable weather, especially if you’re alone or unprepared. Weather conditions can change suddenly and drastically.
- If you’re ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to Paradise. If that’s not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather.
- Without a compass, map, and altimeter, it is extremely difficult to find your way to the trailhead in a whiteout. Carry these items and know how to use them.
- Do not descend on skis or a snowboard in limited visibility—you could become lost.
- When hiking to Camp Muir, be sure to carry emergency bivouac gear so that you can spend the night out if you have to.
- To protect fragile alpine vegetation, hike only on snow or official trails.

Be Bear Aware

Although black bear attacks are extremely rare in the United States and have never occurred in this park, your safety depends mostly on your own actions. A defensive bear will appear agitated and will often give visual and vocal warnings like swatting or stomping the ground, exhaling loudly, huffing, snapping teeth, or lowering the head with ears drawn back while facing you. This response may escalate to a charge. Bears respond to people in

different ways—take time to understand the signals. Be aware of aggressive signals and know how to respond to prevent close encounters.

Watch them from a distance. The best way to avoid unwanted encounters is to be alert, and don’t attract or surprise them. Keep all food and attractants, including trash, securely stored and inaccessible to wildlife. Food conditioning, where animals associate people with food, is one of the leading causes of bears injuring humans.

If Charged by a Black Bear



- Stand your ground and do not run.
- If the bear stops, slowly back away while talking, keeping the bear in view while leaving the area.
- If it continues, act aggressively, shouting and throwing rocks or sticks.
- If the bear attacks and you have food, distance yourself from the food.
- If the bear attacks and you do not have food, fight back aggressively. This is likely a predatory attack. The bear is treating you as prey.

What You Need to Know...

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. To protect yourself and your park, please follow these rules.

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistive listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available; and the building and exhibits are accessible by wheelchair. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible in summer. An accessible trail leads to the base of the Paradise meadows and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help. Inquire at the Jackson Visitor Center for more information. TDD: (360) 569-2177.

Camping

Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

Wildlife

Do not feed, approach, or disturb the wildlife.

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

While limited recreational use of marijuana is now legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Firearms

The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places have signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.

Pets and Service Animals

Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots and on roads currently open to public vehicles. During hot weather do not leave pets in vehicles.

Service animals individually trained to perform specific tasks are allowed on trails and in park facilities only if they are providing a service for a person with a disability. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), “therapy animals” providing emotional support do not qualify as service animals. Service dogs-in-training are not service animals under ADA, but are considered pets.

Fires in the Park

Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited.

Fishing & Boating

A license is not required for fishing, but certain park waters are closed or open to fly fishing only. NOTICE: Research studies have shown mercury is present in some trout in a few park lakes. Check the Washington Department of Health website <http://www.doh.wa.gov/> for information on fish consumption.

Motorized boating is prohibited in the park. Non-motorized boating is permitted on all lakes except Frozen Lake, Reflection Lakes, Ghost Lake, Shadow Lake, and Tipsoo Lake.

Bikes in the Park

Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

The more time you spend in an area with geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved

in an emergency event. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, you must decide if you will assume the risk of visiting these potentially dangerous locations.

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground! A location 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Park Websites

Mount Rainier National Park www.nps.gov/mora
North Coast and Cascades Science & Learning Network <http://lnwparkscience.org/>

Official Park Social Media Sites

[facebook.com/MountRainierNPS](https://www.facebook.com/MountRainierNPS)
[flickr.com/groups/MountRainierNPS](https://www.flickr.com/groups/MountRainierNPS)
twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
[youtube.com/MountRainierNPS](https://www.youtube.com/MountRainierNPS)



Park Partners

Who’s responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone! Here are some groups that deserve special thanks.

Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm

Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org

Washington’s National Park Fund
www.wnnpf.org

Mount Rainier National Park Associates
www.mrnpa.org

Student Conservation Association
www.thesca.org

Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org



Hazards of the Season

While history shows that heavy snowpack conditions significantly increase search and rescue incidents, many hikers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges encountered by early snowpack. Snow may start covering trails as early as October. Conditions change rapidly during the day and footprints in the snow quickly disappear. This has left many day hikers disoriented upon their return trip, expecting to simply follow their own tracks back to the snow-free trail. This results in many lost individuals, injuries, and fatalities.

Snow avalanches are common in early summer. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing. Be prepared for travel in avalanche terrain. Carry a transceiver, probe, and shovel and know how to use them. Determine if the location you are traveling is avalanche prone. When in doubt, ask questions or don't go. Unstable snow may slide at any time—not just in winter! Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly. A pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you're ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather.

Also consider the steep snow slopes, melt holes, thinning snow bridges, and other hazards that you may encounter, and be honest with yourself in assessing your skills and experience.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead consider using wands on snow-covered trails. Always carry a good map and compass, and actively use them on snow-covered trails. Also consider supplementing your map and compass with an external antenna GPS for best coverage beneath a forest canopy. Again, it is extremely important that you know how to use these tools.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. When route-finding, note important landmarks. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around.

Climbing

Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000 feet and on glaciers. Climbing information—including fees, routes, and conditions—is available at ranger stations. Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:

- Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
- International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
- Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Wilderness Camping

Wilderness camping permits are required for all overnight stays in the park's backcountry. Permits and backcountry information are available at all wilderness information centers and most visitor centers (see page four for locations and hours).

Although permits are free, there is an optional, fee-based reservation system for campers and climbers in effect May through September. Backcountry reservations are \$20 per party (one–12 people) for one to 14 consecutive nights.

Seventy percent of all backcountry sites and zones are available for reservation. Permits for the remaining 30 percent are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, no more than one day in advance of the start of the trip.



Secrets to a Safe Hike

Hiking at Mount Rainier National Park can mean adventure, exploration, learning, or just plain having fun! The secret to a great hike? Staying safe!

Hikers need to emphasize personal safety as they journey by foot through the backcountry and along many of the popular trails. For trail information, talk with a ranger at any visitor center or wilderness information center. Use the following tips to keep your journey safe.

Use Common Sense

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Be prepared. Carry the ten essentials even on a short sightseeing hike.
- Always tell someone of your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return.
- Do not travel alone. If visibility is poor, do not travel at all.

Pay Attention To The Weather

At Mount Rainier, the weather can change rapidly. Hikers who aren't prepared for weather conditions increase their risk of becoming lost or injured. Avoid problems: plan and prepare for Mount Rainier's changeable weather.

Crossing Streams Safely

Many hikers underestimate the power of moving water and some consider their former successful stream crossings a ticket to the other side. This may not be true. Regardless of your knowledge, skills, and experience use these pointers in making wise decisions when crossing a stream:

- Early morning when river levels are generally at their lowest is the best time to cross.
- Look for an area with a smooth bottom and slow moving water below knee height.
- Before crossing, scout downstream for log jams, waterfalls and other hazards that could trap you. Locate a point where you can exit if you fall in.
- Use a sturdy stick to maintain two points of contact with the ground at all times.
- Unfasten the belt of your pack so you can easily discard it if necessary.
- Staring down at moving water can make you dizzy. Look forward as much as possible.

Taking these few precautions could save your day...and your life!

Before you step off the trail...

... consider this: each step into a meadow crushes an average of 20 plants!



When exploring Mount Rainier's fragile meadows hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.

Leave No Trace

- Plan ahead & prepare
- Travel & camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts*
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of others

*Fires are for emergency use only; they are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness

Keep Wildlife Wild

- Please don't feed the wildlife.
- Store your food in an animal-proof container or inside your car.
- Don't leave food, beverages, pet food, or toiletries unattended for any length of time.
- Clean up picnic areas after you eat.



Human food puts animals at risk and some die as a result. For example birds, like jays and ravens are effective nest predators—eating the eggs or young of other birds. By

feeding jays or ravens, visitors concentrate these nest predators near roads and trails and inadvertently contribute to the death of songbirds in the same area.

Feeding wildlife harms them in many ways. Beggar squirrels, foxes, deer, and jays learn to approach people and busy areas. They often get hit and killed by cars. Animals that become accustomed to humans and human food may also pursue and injure visitors. Biologists and rangers must intervene, with killing the animal as the last resort.

Carry the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them!

1. Map & compass
2. Sunglasses, sunscreen, & hat
3. Extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
4. Flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries)
5. First aid supplies
6. Waterproof matches or lighter
7. Repair kit & tools (for gear)
8. Extra food
9. Extra water
10. Emergency shelter

Visitor Facility Hours

Visitor Centers		
Longmire Information Center (360) 569-6575	September 2 - October 13 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily Starting October 14 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily	Information, exhibits, book sales, gifts
Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise (360) 569-6571	September 2 - 14 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily September 15 - October 13 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily October 14 - December 31 10:00 am - 5:00 pm weekends and holidays only	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, park film, book sales, gifts, food service
Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6581	September 2 - September 7 Noon - 4:00 pm Thursday - Sunday Closed Monday - Wednesday Closed for the season starting Sept. 8	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, book sales, gifts
Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425	July 3 - September 21 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Sept. 22	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, book sales, gifts

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

Longmire Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6650	July 1 - October 13 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Oct. 14	Wilderness camping & climbing permits
Paradise Climbing Information Center (Guide House) (360) 569-6641	September 3 - September 28 7:00 am - 3:00 pm weekends only Midweek self-registration at the CIC Closed for the season starting Sept. 29 After September 28 self-register at the Paradise Ranger Station	Climbing & wilderness permits, exhibits, information
White River Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6670	July 1 - October 13 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Oct. 14	Wilderness camping & eastside climbing permits
Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639	Call for hours	Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits

Food & Lodging

For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com

National Park Inn at Longmire Open year-round	Front desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily Dining room: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm daily (7:00 am - 8:00 pm Fri/Sat/holidays)	Lodging, dining room
Longmire General Store Open year-round	10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily	Gifts, apparel, snacks, winter recreation equipment rentals
Paradise Inn	Front desk open 24 hours daily Closed for the season starting Oct. 6	Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop, post office
Paradise Camp Deli and Gift Shop, in the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise Open year-round	September 2 - September 14 10:00 am - 5:45 pm daily September 15 - October 13 11:00 am - 4:45 pm daily October 14 - December 31 11:00 am - 4:45 pm weekends and holidays only	Food, gifts, books, apparel
Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop	September 2 - 7 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily September 8 - 30 Open weekends only with limited service Closed for the season starting Oct. 1	Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging

Gasoline, lodging, dining, religious services, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/mora. GASOLINE IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

Superintendent
Randy King

Mailing Address
55210 238th Avenue East
Ashford, WA 98304

E-mail
MORAInfo@nps.gov

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211
(360) 569-2177 TDD

Lost and Found
(360) 569-6608

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Bicycling Opportunities

Bicycling on park highways has become increasingly popular. However, winding roads, blind curves, heavy traffic, and very narrow road shoulders present safety issues. Here are options for cyclists seeking less crowded routes during the fall season.

- White River and Sunrise Roads:** After these paved roads close for the season to vehicle traffic (usually in late October, depending on weather conditions), bicyclists and hikers may travel on them from the SR 410 junction to Sunrise (6 miles one-way to White River Campground, 16 miles one-way to Sunrise). Road maintenance may require closure of the Sunrise Road at any time.
- Westside Road:** A popular mountain-bike route, this gravel road is 13 miles one-way with an elevation gain of approximately 1,120 feet.
- Carbon River Road:** This gravel road is open only to hikers and bicyclists beyond the park boundary. The road gains approximately 600 feet in elevation along its 5-mile length; some sections are rough and rocky. The road ends at Ipsut Creek backcountry camp, beyond which only hikers are allowed.

Remember, *there are no designated bike trails in the park. Bicycles are not permitted on any park trails, or in any off-trail areas.* Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles. Travel safely, and always wear a helmet.

Hazard Trees

Like the mountain itself, trees are both beautiful and potentially dangerous, and merit our respect and caution. Even a healthy tree with no defects can present a danger under certain conditions, so stay alert on breezy days for falling limbs and cones, and avoid forested areas during storms when possible. Sudden gusts can do great damage to trees—as well as anything in range of the falling debris.

If you notice something that causes concern about a tree within a developed area—especially if it’s in your campsite—please inform a ranger or other park employee, so it can be evaluated.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Fee	Group Sites	Group Fees	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	May 25–Oct. 8	3,180’	173	\$12/15*	5	\$40-64	Flush	Yes	RV 35’/Trailer 27’
Ohanapecosh*	May 25–Oct. 8	1,914’	188	\$12/15*	2	\$40	Flush	Yes	RV 32’/Trailer 27’
White River	June 29–Sept. 30	4,232’	112	\$12	0	N/A	Flush	No	RV 27’/Trailer 18’
Mowich Lake	Primitive walk-in campground, 200’ from parking area to camping area. Tents only. 10 sites, 3 group sites (max. group size 12). No fee (must self-register at campground kiosk). Chemical toilets, <i>no potable water</i> . No fires allowed. Elevation 4,929’; generally open July through early October, depending on road and weather conditions. Call 360-829-9639 for information.								

*Advance reservations are recommended for individual sites at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds from June 28 through the night of September 2. These can be made up to 6 months in advance. Reservations for group sites are required May 25 through the night of October 7, and can be made up to one year in advance. To make a reservation online, go to www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.